

Members

Rep. Vernon Smith, Chair
Rep. Ralph Ayres
Rep. Duane Cheney
Rep. Ralph Foley
Sen. William Alexa
Sen. Anita Bowser
Sen. David Ford
Sen. John Waterman



CORRECTIONS MATTERS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

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Committee
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Authority: 2-5-21-10

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 29, 2000
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Rep. Vernon Smith, Chair; Rep. Duane Cheney; Rep. Ralph Foley;
Sen. David Ford; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. Anita Bowser; Sen.
William Alexa.

Members Absent: Rep. Ralph Ayres.

Rep. Smith convened the meeting at 10:10.

First, Rep. Smith requested Virginia Dill McCarty and James Holland to appear at the next meeting to discuss the role of the Board of Correction.

Secondly, Melvin Carraway, Superintendent of the Indiana State Police, described the investigation that the State Police conducted concerning allegations of an organized white supremacist group at the Putnamville State Correctional Facility. Mr. Carraway told the committee that the State Police attempted to examine three issues:

1. Whether an employee-based white supremacy group, known as the "Brotherhood" exists within the Putnamville Correctional Facility.
2. Whether its members are engaged in illegal drug usage, ghost employment, trafficking with inmates, assaults, and harassment of minority inmates and co-workers. These individuals are also alleged to display colored handkerchiefs from their pants pockets to indicate affiliation with this group, and wearing rings embossed with a swastika emblem.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

3. Whether the commissioner and other administrative staff members of the Department of Correction provided protection and preferential treatment to those employees who are alleged members of this group.

Superintendent Carraway indicated that there have been previous investigations of the incidence of racist groups at the Putnamville Correctional Facility in 1994 and 1995. For this investigation, Superintendent Carraway indicated that 285 individuals were interviewed concerning the existence of this group. He indicated that none of the interviews resulted in members of the brotherhood being named.

The superintendent also indicated that allegations of criminal activity were investigated for the following illegal drug use by staff on the premises of the correctional facility, trafficking of illegal drugs, physical assaults by members of this group and illegal actions on the part of the commissioner were also investigated. He indicated that no actionable activities were found to have taken place.

Finally, Mr. Carraway indicated that the result of his investigation included three recommendations for the Department of Correction:

1. A consistent discipline policy;
2. A clear policy regarding staff housing;
3. Cultural and diversity training for staff and correctional facility.

The next item on the agenda was a summary of the evaluations of the community corrections and community transition programs that the Department of Correction administers. Mark Goodpaster presented this summary to the committee members. A copy of this summary is included in Attachment A of this report.

Other persons in the audience who testified concerning the community corrections and community transition program included Ralph Watson, Hamilton County Community Corrections Program, Sheila Hudson, Allen County Community Corrections Program, and Brian Barton, Marion County Community Corrections Program.

Mr. Watson described the different sentencing options that courts have when considering whether the community corrections is an appropriate placement for an offender. He also indicated that the Department of Correction (DOC) needed more staff to provide various assistance to the community corrections programs. He told the committee that DOC has three staff people to administer a \$31 million program that funds community corrections programs in 62 counties. He said that DOC needs more staff to adequately administer the program, answer questions that local administrators have, or assist these local administrators in identifying other funding sources.

Mr. Watson also recommended the following to the committee:

- more funding for community corrections programs,
- death benefits for community corrections officers, and
- separating the contract beds from the community corrections budget.

Ms. Hudson provided the committee with a handout of her comments concerning community corrections and community transition program. (See Attachment B).

Mr. Barton described some of the benefits of the community corrections program to the local community and the state economy.

David Bottorff, representing the Indiana Association of Counties presented to the committee a letter from Bettye Lou Jerrel, president of the Vanderburgh County Commissioners. This letter is included as Attachment C to these minutes.

Representative Smith then announced that the final three meetings of the committee would be on Thursday, October 12, at 1:30 pm, Thursday, October 19, at 10:00 am and Friday, October 20, at 10:00 am.

The meeting was then adjourned.